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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BUCHAREST 001641

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: LATEST ROMANIAN POLLS - PRESIDENT BASESCU STILL
POPULAR, BUT NUMBERS DROPPING

REF: A. BUCHAREST 01378, B. BUCHAREST 01084

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY

1. (SBU) Summary. Opinion polls conducted in July indicated a slight decline in support for both President Basescu and his center-right Liberal-Democratic (PNL-PD) Alliance. Support for Prime Minister Calin Popescu-Tariceanu dropped more dramatically, coinciding with his recent vacillation over whether to resign and force new elections. At the same time, few Romanians want new elections, with roughly 60 percent opposing an early vote. Minister of Culture and Religion Mona Musca remains the most popular cabinet member, with the ministers of Justice and Foreign Affairs close behind. End Summary.

2. (U) Two recent opinion polls carried out by respected pollsters provide a snapshot of evolving political attitudes, coinciding with recent controversy surrounding the PM's vacillation whether to resign and force snap elections. The independent Center for Urban Center for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) conducted an omnibus poll between July 10 and 17 among 1050 respondents over the age of 18, with a margin of error of 3 percent. The opposition center-left Social Democratic Party-leaning Marketing and Public Opinion Poll Institute (IMAS) conducted its poll between July 7 and 15 among 1252 respondents, with a margin of error of 3 percent.

CURS: A MAJORITY OPPOSES NEW ELECTIONS

3. (U) The CURS poll, focusing on a range of political issues, produced the following results:

- Do you think early elections would be good or bad for Romania?

- Good	29 percent
- Bad	59
- Don't know, no response	12

- If early elections were to be held this Sunday, which party would you choose? (Of those respondents who expressed an opinion.)

- PNL-PD	45 percent
- PSD	30
- PRM (Great Romanian Party)	10
- UDMR (Ethnic Hungarian Party)	6
- PC (Conservative Party, former PUR)	3
- Others	6

- How satisfied are you with the following Cabinet Ministers? (Note: The titles/portfolios of each minister were not included in the question. End Note.)

	(Very) Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Don't Know
- Mona Musca	56 percent	29	15
- Religion/Culture			
- Monica Macovei	39	35	26
- Justice			
- Mihai Ungureanu	37	23	40
- External Affairs			
- Gheorghe Flutur	29	33	38
- Agriculture			
- Marko Bella	25	47	28
- Minister of State			
- Codruta Seres	25	44	21
- Minister of State			
- Ionut Popescu	24	39	37
- Finance			
- Teodor Atansiu	23	29	48
- Defense			
- Vasile Blaga	23	26	51
- Interior and Administration			
- George Copos	19	32	49
- Minister of State			
- Mircea Cinteza	15	49	36
- Health			
- Sulfina Barbu	15	42	43
- Environment			
- Mircea Miclea	14	31	55
- Education			

- Gheorghe Dobre	14	29	57
Transport			
- Gheorghe Barbu	11	27	62
Labor			
- Gheorghe Seculici	10	24	66
Minister of State			
- Zsolt Nagy	10	20	70
Communications and IT			
- Mihai Voicu	9	18	73
Minister Delegate of Coordination			
- Bogdan Olteanu	8	20	72
Minister Delegate of Parliament Relations			
- Ene Dinga	6	18	76
EU Integration			
- Cristian David	5	19	76
Minister Delegate International Finances			

14. (SBU) In a separate question, 57 percent of respondents believed that Presidential Counselor and former PNL leader Teodor Stolojan would be the best Prime Minister, as opposed to 20 percent who favored incumbent Calin Popescu-Tariceanu.

IMAS: PNL-PD SUPPORT DECLINING

15. (U) The IMAS poll provides an indication of relative trends during the first seven months of PNL-PD government. Results are compared to responses to the same question asked in January, March, June, and July 2005. Most striking is the significant drop in support for PM Tariceanu, with similar erosion for Basescu.

- Which party would you vote for if elections were to be held this Sunday?

	Jan 2005	March	June	July
PNL-PD	66 percent	54	55	47
PSD	19	28	23	32
PRM	7	9	10	12
UDMR	5	5	6	5
Others	3	5	5	4

- How much confidence do you have in the following public figures?

	Jan 2005	March	June	July
Traian Basescu	73 percent	58	58	50
Mircea Geoana	44	40	41	38
1C. Tariceanu	65	48	42	34
Adrian Nastase	27	31	26	30
Emil Boc	39	27	26	27
1C. Vadim Tudor	21	19	17	22
Marko Bela	15	11	15	11
Cozmin Gusa	-	-	11	10
Dan Voiculescu	9	8	6	7

16. (SBU) Comment: Both polls were completed before PM Tariceanu's July 19 announcement that he would not resign. Given the general public disapproval of his vacillation before that announcement and his initial lack of focus on flood relief, his standing would likely be lower in polling conducted today. Interestingly, the two most popular cabinet members were both women, perhaps positively indicating a hairline crack in Romania's historic "glass ceiling" that has impeded women political figures from moving forward in the past. End Comment.

17. (U) Amembassy Bucharest's reporting telegrams are available on the Bucharest SIPRNET Website:
www.state.sgov.gov/eur/bucharest.

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